

NewsLetter

Spring 2008

vol. 11, issue 2



Sunflower Chapter
of the American
Historical Society
of Germans
from Russia

Long-time chapter members Verlin and Henrietta Dreiling load up their plates at the annual Fasenacht meeting.



The feast before the fast

by Sister Alice Ann Pfeifer CSA

AFTER SPENDING MUCH OF DECEMBER AND JANUARY cooped up during one of our worst winters on recent record, members pretty much had a blast at the *Fasenacht* meeting on February 10.

This time chapter cooks and bakers outdid themselves bringing in a host of delectable foods for the annual gathering that always marks the beginning of Lent. Besides an array of traditional dishes containing potatoes, noodles, dumplings, ground beef, cabbage, sauerkraut, and homegrown *Schwarzberren*, Leona Pfeifer even brought us some Russian cookies to sample. They had been shipped to her by a Russian friend.

Program features childhood memories of Lent

The program began with members sharing their childhood memories of Lent. First up was Judy Hoffman, whose parents grew up in Liebenthal. She recalled that every child in the family had to choose something to give up for Lent, and for her it was always candy. Her mom gave her a box in which to keep all the sweets she didn't eat during Lent, only to be opened and eaten on Easter Sunday morning. Praying the stations in church was an important family Lenten activity, as well as attending Good Friday services from 1 to 3 p.m., which she recalled were "interminably long for a kid."

(continued on p. 6)



Attention,
future planners!
Picnic on Aug. 17

Next MEETING

Apr. 27

SOCIAL...12:30
MEETING...1:00
PROGRAM...1:30
ICE CREAM & CAKE...2:30

The video "A Light in the Darkness" will be shown. For the folklore segment of the program, Leona W. Pfeifer promises something completely new, so come to the meeting and let her surprise you!

To get to the parish hall in Antonino, take US-183 south from Hays for 5.6 miles, then turn west onto Antonino Road and drive another 3.9 miles. Once you get to Antonino, you'll see the church on your left.

Please remember
to tell our President, Joe Werth,
if you want to sign up
for the convention bus!



This is eighth in a series of unedited reprints. The column "Liebenthal Locals" appeared in the LaCrosse Republican intermittently throughout the early 1900s.

An interesting peculiarity of these entries is the "Pifeifer" spelling for the name "Pfeifer," doubtless reflecting a time when local Pfeifer families had not yet dropped the first "f" from the traditional German pronunciation of their names.

**THE LACROSSE REPUBLICAN
May 6, 1915**

The writer will again write Liebenthal locals beginning with this issue.

The late rains and the condition of the weather is making all the fields look green.

Peter Pifeifer of Marionthal is here visiting Relatives. (continued on p. 4)

Old-time medicine still used today

by Bernie Schumacher

JANUARY OF 1963 WAS A TERRIFYING TIME for our family as our daughter, Brenda, who was five months old, lay in a hospital bed in the old St. Anthony's Hospital. IV's were connected to her little body due to dehydration caused by severe nausea. After several days and no improvement, our family doctor made an appointment with KU Med Center in Kansas City. He said, "You must take her immediately or she will die."



With prayer comes enlightenment. I know this because my mother said, "Has anyone pulled her navel?" I told the nurse and doctor about this and naturally they made fun of me, so being a stubborn German (good trait), I took matters into my own hands. I stood guard outside my daughter's hospital room while my mother-in-law, Helen Schumacher, with her wonderful healing hands pulled her navel in place. I could hear the cracking sound of proper placement of the muscle from where I was standing. This took place about 7 p.m. and we were to leave for Kansas City at 6 a.m. to be at her appointment on time. We knew she was healed and really didn't have to go to Kansas City, but we were still in fear of some serious illness so we went. I gave her a bottle of milk while driving to KC and she kept it in her stomach for the first time in a week. After many hard-to-endure tests, the doctors could find nothing wrong with her.

Some months later, Brenda had a follow-up appointment with our family doctor. The nurse put us in the examining room and placed her medical file on the table. While she was out of the room, I read the file. The results from KU Med were in it. I laughed when I read some of the comments about how perplexed they were and why they couldn't find anything wrong, so I felt it my duty to tell our doctor just in case he runs into this problem again. He said, "There no scientific evidence of this," so I said nothing more.

There are two methods for putting this muscle in place that I know can be done:

1. The sick person has to lie on his stomach while the practitioner, with one hand on each side of the belly button, slides the hands firmly around the waist until

the hands meet at the spine and with skin in hand gives a good tug. If the navel is out of place, you will hear a pop; if not, no harm done. Patient must lie quietly for at least five minutes following treatment to make sure the muscle remains in place.

2. My mother took a large jelly glass, cut a piece of cardboard a little smaller than the glass opening, put a little melted wax on the cardboard, then sat the candle on the wax to make sure it was secure. The cardboard with the lit candle was placed over the belly button, then the glass put over the candle. As the candle went out due to lack of oxygen, the skin would draw up into the glass, thus putting the strained muscle in place. I remember having to lie very still for this method so I wouldn't get burned by the candle.

Helen Schumacher told me a story about an 11-year-old girl who died because the family didn't recognize the problem until it was too late. The family tried to pull the muscle just before she died, but by that time other complications were present. I'm sure the child had become severely dehydrated.

YOU



DID IT!

Your vote helped make St. Fidelis Church in Victoria one of the official "8 Wonders of Kansas."

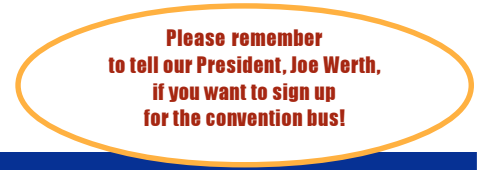
As stated on www.8wonders.org,

"Here's how the project worked. The Kansas Sampler Foundation announced the 8 Wonders of Kansas project in early April and asked for public nominations. Then a

selection committee narrowed the choices and we announced the 24 finalists on June 1. The public was then invited to vote either online or via paper ballot. 24,070 votes were cast to determine the top 8 Wonders of Kansas."

The other wonders selected were Abilene's Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum, Greensburg's Big Well, Hutchinson's Underground Salt Museum,

Hutchinson's Kansas Cosmosphere and Space Center, the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve and Flint Hills, Cheyenne Bottoms/Quivira National Wildlife Refuge, and Castle Rock and the Monument Rocks.



Why they left home, pt. 2

by Helen Jira

ED. NOTE: In part one, we learned why so many Germans were attracted to Russia in the late 1700s by Tsarina Catherine's promises. We left off with a description of how people from all over Germany converged upon the north German port cities of Luebeck and Hamburg in order to set sail for Russian shores on the Baltic Sea.

Traveling from Luebeck to Kronstadt on the Gulf of Finland lasted weeks or even months depending on the weather conditions. As a rule the ship docked at Kronstadt in the northwest part of Russia. People were then transported to Oranienbaum, a port for St. Petersburg. Contrary to the promises of the Manifesto, they were all informed that they would be Volga farmers.

The Russian government approved different routes to the Volga. Some arrived at Kostrama before winter, while others had to stay in Torzhok until spring. Another group traveled to Tver and sailed down the Volga to the settlement site. Still another group traveled to Moscow and then to Petrovsk where they stayed for the winter.

The German people had experienced cold winters in western Europe, but nothing like the first Russian winter. The wind blew constantly as the snow piled higher and higher. Some spent the winter in Luebeck or at Oranienbaum and arrived too late at the Volga settlement to plant crops and construct living quarters. As soon as spring arrived, those at Petrovsk traveled to Saratov and others sailed down the Volga to dock at Saratov.

On March 19, 1764 Catherine announced an area for colonization along the lower Volga in Saratov District. This piece of land included about 133 miles on each side of the Volga. The following year she opened lands in Samara District for colonization. A total of 104 colonies were established in these areas from 1763 through 1767. She later extended the frontiers east to the Ural Mountains and south to the Black Sea.

Colonies were divided into districts called Bezirkes. Each spanned an area of 40 to 47 miles, which was considered enough land to support 1000 families.

Government plans failed in almost every guarantee of the Manifesto. After the convoy crossed the Volga at Saratov, they were taken to the east-bank prairie, the start of the great Russian Steppes. As the caravan reached the Karamann River,



some forty miles east of Saratov, everyone was asked to step down. This was their home in nowhere. The only thing they could do was roll up their sleeves and go to work.

The first winter was extremely difficult for the first colonists. Each colonist was granted an allocation of 65 acres of land, but received little government assistance to make the land profitable. They were given primitive tools, such as a handmade wooden plow, sickle, hatchet, rake, pole wagon and two horses.

Because government housing contractors would not arrive until spring, the settlers dug caves. This was how they battled the first winter to stay alive.

(to be continued)

LIEBENTHAL LOCALS
(continued from p. 2)

George Pifeifer and Godfrud Ronda will soon complete their houses in town.

Mike Legleiter is erecting a new bungalow in town.

C.E. Funk and Frank Richards of LaCrosse were here on business Saturday.

Anne Scheonfeld of Topeka is here enjoying a visit with relatives.

Peter Dheil and wife, formerly citizens of our town and who now live in Olmitz spent

Sunday here.

Casper Supper has rented the Adam Pifeifer rarm north of town this year.

H.J. Yeoman will farm the Yeoman farm this year while John intends to make his future home in Osage county, near Osage City.

Fedalis Herrman will complete his new house soon.

Our town schools will soon close.

Our base ball team don't seem to have courage enough to start out this spring.

Father Stollenwerk and Father Wenzel of Scheonchen spent Monday at Pifeifer. Frank Schaffer has completed his new house North East of town.

HAYS CITY SENTINEL
March 8, 1892


During the past week quite a large number from this county visited Trego and Graham counties in the interest of proposed Russian settlements in those counties. About 100 quarter sections are wanted for farms by the proposed settlers. Extensive tracts of land were found in Trego and southern Graham with a good prospect of purchase. Our Russian fellow citizens of this county have aided materially in the development of our farm interests. One characteristic of our Russian farmers is they hold on and persevere patiently from year to year, exercising strict economy. As wheat growers they are a success and raise wheat every year without serious failure.

On last Sunday six families arrived here from Russia, five yesterday and eighteen this morning, all coming direct from the old country. Money is being sent there every day for tickets. There are now at Herzog 45 families who have come over this winter.

Presented courtesy of the
**ELLIS COUNTY HISTORICAL
SOCIETY MUSEUM,**
100 W. 7th, Hays, Kansas

Winter Hours:
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.,
Tuesday-Friday. Closed Saturday-Monday.
Admission: Adults, \$3. Children 3-12, \$1.

Visit us at www.elliscountyhistoricalmuseum.org



FRANCIS GIEBLER, 1926-2008

On January 12, 2008, the Sunflower Chapter lost a member and a good friend to many of us, Francis "Giebe" Giebler. This was a member who was always willing to do whatever he could for the chapter, whether it was wiping down tables after our annual breakfast, helping to lead a song or two, or (how can anyone forget?) telling a good joke.

Giebe loved the music of our forefathers and was always available to lend a hand with songleading, especially at the international convention held this past summer here in Hays.

The Sunflower Chapter extends to the family our sincere sympathy. As he sang so many times with the Volga German Men's Choir, "*Vollendet hieneiden ist nun mein Lauf. Jetzt nimm' mich, O Vater, zu dir hinauf. Mein Herzen fand endlich die ewige Ruh'. Dein Engel schloss freundlich mein' Augen zu.*"

BELOVED VOLGA GERMAN HYMNS

**'Bringen
Garben ein'**

This familiar Protestant hymn is known in English as "Bringing in the Sheaves."

1.
Die mit Traenen saeen,
ernten einst mit Freuden!
Herrlich wird der Jubel
einstens droben sein.
Guten Samen streuen,
die der Herr gesendet,
Und sie werden freudig
Garben bringen ein.

Katerinenstadt, Russia, 1917



Chorus
Garben bringen ein, garben bringen ein!
Die mit Traenen saeen, bringen Garben ein!
Bringen Garben ein, bringen Garben ein!
Ernten einst mit Freuden bringen Garben ein!

2.
Saeet denn am Morgen
edlen Liebessamen,
Haltet auch am Mittag
eure Hand nicht ein,
Saeet bis am Abend
dunkel Schatten ziehen,
Herrlich wird die Ernt fuer
euch am Ende sein.

1.
Sowing in the morning,
sowing seeds of kindness,
Sowing in the noontide and the dewy eve.
Waiting for the harvest and the time of reaping;
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.

Chorus
Bringing in the sheaves, bringing in the sheaves,
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves,
Bringing in the sheaves, bringing in the sheaves,
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.

2.
Sowing in the sunshine, sowing in the shadows,
Fearing neither clouds
nor winter's chilling breeze;
By and by the harvest and the labor ended;
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.

OVERHEARD

Sister Martina Stegman OP, who serves in the parishes of Liebenenthal, LaCrosse, and Timken, recently returned from Sunday Mass remarking on a crying baby in one of the churches that day. "That poor mother tried *everything* to quiet her baby," she said, "and it didn't even work when she put in the plug!" (Sister meant "pacifier.")



This story goes back about 25 years or so. Remember when the Fox Pavilion in Hays was the Fox Theatre? Before entering the darkened theatre, you snubbed out your cigarette in a bowl filled with sand atop a small pillar, then descended down the slanted floor to the row of your choice. Not too familiar with this ritual--but

quite familiar with another--an absent-minded Sister Francis Borgia Dreiling CSA one day entered the Fox with a group of sisters to see a new children's movie. Pausing at the door, first she dipped her finger in the bowl of sand and crossed herself, then walked down the slanted aisle and genuflected before entering her row!

Life Sketches of Early Agnesians

by Sister Alice Ann Pfeifer CSA

The third Kansas native to die as a Sister of St. Agnes was Sister Susanna Wellbrock. Two discrepancies appear in historical records about her. Her life sketch in the CSA archives says she was born in Victoria in 1868, although the 1976 book *Towers of Faith and Courage* says that the English colony of Victoria was not founded until 1873 by a group of Scottish and English immigrants. Three years later, in 1876, the Volga Germans arrived and founded the adjacent village of Herzog. How could she have been born in a Kansas village not yet in existence at the time of her birth? Victoria's centennial book further states that Sister died in 1902, whereas CSA records say 1909. If any of you newsletter readers can clear up these discrepancies, please drop me an e-mail (alice53pfeifer@yahoo.com) or look me up at the April 27 meeting.

Sister Susanna was among the first in a long line of outstanding cooks to enter the convent from Kansas. Even today, some of the finest Agnesian cooks have Kansas and/or Volga German roots, including Sister Paul Ann Dinkel who presently works at a rest home in Hays.

Finally, it is worth noting that Sister Susanna worked at two different New York parishes founded by Capuchin priests: Queen of Angels in Harlem and Sacred Heart in Yonkers. Sister

Sr. Susanna Wellbrock, 1868-1909

Sister M. Susanna, Mary Wellbrock, was born at Victoria, Kansas on May 13, 1868. Her parents were George Wellbrock and Mary E. Kohne. She entered the Congregation on January 17, 1893; was admitted into the novitiate in 1894; to temporary profession on January 21, 1895; to second profession on January 21, 1898; to perpetual profession on July 15, 1905.

Sister Susanna was a good pious religious, who devoted her time and energy to the fulfillment of her duties. She attended to the household work at the mission on 113th street, New York City, also at Yonkers, N.Y., to the great satisfaction of all the Sisters.

Obedience and charity were her characteristic virtues.

For a long time Sister suffered intense pain from the trouble in her feet; later she developed infection in the limbs followed by dropsy. The doctors were unable to stem the infection, and our good Sister, realizing her condition, prepared herself for heaven. She renewed her profession and asked pardon for her shortcomings and thanked all for the kindness which had been shown her.

The last Sacraments were administered and with sentiments of childlike resignation she calmly awaited the end, which came to her at Yonkers, N.Y. on June 5, 1909.

She lies in the cemetery at Yonkers. R.I.P.



surely felt comfortable in those places because she grew up with the Capuchins at St. Fidelis Church in Victoria. For many years Capuchins and Agnesians worked side by side at parishes in Wisconsin, Kansas, Pennsylvania, and New York. Today the tradition continues only at St. Joseph's Church in Hays.

The role of a homemaking sister was crucial in the early days of the congregation, when sisters were opening new schools in states stretching east to west from New York to Dakota Territory and north to south from Wisconsin to Texas. It took only three sisters to start a school, two to do the teaching and one to stay in the

convent and do the housekeeping and cooking.

Even as late as the 1970s and 1980s, when sisters still lived in large convents in many places, cooks were essential to keeping up everyone's morale. It was always the cook who was first to notice when the sisters were falling into the doldrums for the same reasons other people do--problems at school, a long spate of gloomy weather, a tragic world event. The homemaking sister often responded by baking an extra treat for the sisters' supper or announcing there would be beer and popcorn served at evening recreation.

The feast before the fast

(continued from p. 1)

Next, Vernon Befort of Munjor spoke. He recalled that during Lent his mom always reprimanded him for any misconduct by saying, "You can't do that--it's Lent!" Vernon drily added, "So I always figured I'd just wait until after Lent, then do it twice!"

He also remembered that the boys who were church servers always called people to worship on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday by walking the streets of town making noise with wooden clappers. Bells were not used on these most solemn of days in the church year. The boys always looked forward to Saturday, which was their "pay day" when villagers rewarded them for their services. Usually the pay was a dozen eggs, which in turn could be sold for 60 cents a dozen.

Then Easter Sunday always brought what Vernon called "the Easter parade"-- all the women and girls in town attending Mass in their new hats and dresses. The boys went to church early just to "girl watch." One year, however, Vernon's mom puzzled him by buying *him* a new Easter hat. What for? Was he pretty enough to be a girl? But then, Vernon added with a twinkle in his eye, he always had been "special" among the four boys in the family. One day he had proved it by arriving late for school, which made his mom mutter something about having "*drei Junge und ein Esel*" (three boys and one donkey). Forever after that, his mom called him her "*Esel*"!

Speaking as a representative of Catherine, Glenda Schuetz frankly admitted, "I hated Lent!" For her family, it meant going to Mass every day and twice on Ash Wednesday, besides attending the Stations of the Cross every Friday evening. She used to tell her parents she would *never* make her kids go to church.

Last to share his memories was Jerry Braun of Victoria. He noted that many of his experiences had been similar to those of previous speakers. However, one vivid memory they had not mentioned was the observance all year 'round, not just during Lent, of fasting from all food and drink from midnight until after Mass on any day the family attended morning Mass. "Don't forget, you can't drink no water," his mother often repeated to her forgetful children. Then if she caught someone taking a drink, anyway, she would say, "Now you can't go to Communion."

During the folklore segment of the program, Leona Pfeifer explained the present-day customs of celebrating *die Karnival* in Cologne and *Fasnacht* in Munich. These are more elaborate celebrations than those of our ancestors on the Volga. *Unsere Leute* usually had a big meal in the home and played cards or danced the evening before Ash Wednesday.

Business meeting covers variety of topics

During the business meeting that preceded the program, President Joe Werth reminded members to give him any of their suggestions for future programs. Coming up with new ideas for keeping members entertained and informed is a continuing challenge for the chapter board.



Hamming it up! Vernon Befort demonstrates how he looked in the new Easter hat his mother bought him as a boy.

He also reported the results of research done on the possibility of renting a bus for chapter members wishing to attend the joint AHSGR-GRHS convention in Casper this summer. A bus would cost the chapter \$3858, so if at least 30 members would

agree to pay a round-trip fare of \$130, an arrangement could be made. When he asked how many present would want a chartered bus ride to Casper, about half a dozen raised their hands. Joe then told members to think about it some more, and if a minimum of 30 passengers can be found, the chapter will arrange the rental.

Because there are many new chapter members this year, Joe then reminded the group of the purposes of the AHSGR: preserving the history, cultural heritage, and genealogy of *all* Germans from Russia, not just the German Catholics who settled along the Volga. The AHSGR Journal always provides a good read, and those seeking further information would do well to check out the many different books available for purchase through the AHSGR bookstore in Lincoln. The organization is non-profit, so the prices charged for books and genealogical materials are intended simply to meet the costs of making these materials available to members.

Finally, Joe gave special thanks to Dolores Pfannenstiel, Wilma Braun, Betty Leiker, and Betty Pfannenstiel for their usual expert care in providing the day's hospitality.

**Please remember
to tell our President, Joe Werth,
if you want to sign up
for the convention bus!**



THE
TOPEKA
STATE
JOURNAL
Apr. 19, 1907

It is my honest opinion that more real estate has changed hands during the last thirty days than in the previous 12 months. There is some building going on; for instance, 25 new houses have been erected for that number of families who have recently located in this part of the city directly from Russia.

There is this to be said for these people aside from the fact that they are wage

earners and good citizens and that is that they pay as they go. Any time that you see a sidewalk in front of their home you may feel sure that the place is paid for as it is one of their peculiarities.

(Reprint courtesy of Frank Jacobs and Gary Ubert)

A history of Brazil's Volga Germans, pt. 3

The following is extracted from the book *Resumo Histórico e Genealogia dos Alemães do Volga* ("Historical Summary and Genealogy of the Volga Germans") by Carlos Alberto Schwab. It was edited in 1997 on the occasion of the 120th anniversary of the immigration of the Volga Germans to Brazil. Kevin Rupp procured this manuscript for us.

[In the new colonies of Ponta Grossa, Palmeiro and Lapa] farming utensils were granted the settlers, seeds, some cattle, and, as common property for each colony, two bulls for reproduction. In addition, the government assumed an obligation to construct access highways to the colonies in such a way that the settlers themselves built the highways and the government paid for the work.

The "great immigration" happened from October of 1877 to the end of 1878; after this period arrived some additional families, with the last ones coming in 1912. But these late arrivals settled in the cities because by then the colonies practically had disappeared. The settlers who intended to settle in Ponta Grossa in 1912 possessed a very superior education when compared to that of the pioneers of 1877-'78. They spoke Russian.

The immigrant farmers waged an exhausting battle against the poverty of the acidic soil. Their first crop--and many successive ones--failed. Every year that passed made everything more difficult because the tools wore out, there were no more seeds, and draft animals died for lack of appropriate feeding. Worst of all, official doors stayed closed whenever settlers worked up enough courage to

knock on them in search of help.

In view of so many failures, the situation stayed distressing and desperate. The settlers feared that hunger and poverty were closing in on them. What to do? Georg Holzmann and seven companions decided to explore the neighboring municipal districts with the purpose of finding more appropriate lands for agriculture. The eight pioneers, led by old Holzmann, had managed to see a map of the area in the House of the Camera, and it verified that the river Tibagi, after circling Ponta Grossa, ended in a more torrential course of water. They decided to steer for the north along that waterway while checking out the lands that lay along its banks. With the daring plan for their trip and their ranches organized for their absence, they hired a guide and left. The whole community--mainly the eight wives with their children--began to pray that God would help them in the bold feat and that the trip would not be more treacherous than the crossing of the Atlantic Ocean had been.

Noticing the women's concerns, local government bosses infused in the weakest spirits many exaggerated tales about the dangers their men faced by venturing into the country's

immense interior: tropical illnesses, enormous serpents that could butcher a man with greater fury than that of Russia's wolves, and Indians who were eager to attack all Christians within their reach. Impressed with these exaggerations, the pessimists among the women did not believe in the adventurous patricians' return, although they knew that Georg Holzmann was a steady man with much common sense.

Five months later, the eight explorers returned, very satisfied and healthy. They had traveled to the *true* good land: the fertile, verdant area north of Paraná. Abandoning their canoes along the river, they had explored the area along simple foot trails. In São Jerônimo's mountain, in order not to upset the Indians and vice-versa, they kept the maximum possible distance away from the villages. Then going past Monte Alegre, Ventania, they arrived in Castro, where they got a cart and oxen. To demonstrate to the others the fertility of the visited areas, they brought soil samples and more than thirty species of wood.

(to be continued)

NEWS & MEDIA TIDBITS

So how do you explain to a visitor why Hays is called the German capital of Kansas? A few locals tried their best; see the results at www.travel.discovery.com. To access the short video, just type "Hays, Kansas" into the website's search engine. It is best if you have a highspeed internet connection for this. Video footage includes shots of the

Hays welcome sign, the Volga German Haus, the Tea Rose Inn, Warren's Meat Market, Gella's Restaurant, and St. Fidelis Church.

Be prepared to laugh at some of the mistakes the roving reporter makes. She incorrectly states that "Gella" is the name of a German dialect and that Hays has a population of just

over 4000! Tiffany Burnett is very charming and enthusiastic in her reporting, though, so maybe that should earn her a pass.

Grandpa's long walk, pt. 3

by Edgar B. Dreher

When John Philip Dreher, Jr. left Russia in 1876, he was only nine years old. But this strong young boy lived long enough to share the experience of his exhausting trip out of Russia with his grandson, Edgar B. Dreher. Presently 86 years old and residing in Longmont, Colorado, Edgar shared the following write-up with his cousin, Elmer Dreher of Hays.

ED. NOTE: In part two, we left off with the emigrants on their way from Saratov, Russia, to Warsaw, Poland. By this time they have run out of food they brought with them, and they are hunting and fishing along the way to sustain themselves. They also continue to meet up with people who are hostile to them.

"The bad people came again," Grandpa said, "and this time it was terrible. We had guards, but the people who owned the land that we were traveling through thought we were criminals." They harrassed the crowd of emigrants until all of them had departed completely from their territory. When the big crowd finally came to another nice river, they rested for two days. For food they hunted squirrels and fished in the river.

"We continued on our way and more people got sick. The doctor at this time stayed back to take care of the ailing folks," Grandpa continued. This was about the time his own grandpa got sick. Grandpa was crying while he was telling this part of the story because this was the time his grandpa got sick and passed from the illness.

"Days after days of walking we finally made it to Warsaw. We had to stay on the right side of the city. The occupants of Warsaw did not like us to be so near to their city. We stayed for only two days before we continued on our trek. The next stage of the journey was 500 miles to Hamburg. On the way to Hamburg, we were so tired and exhausted we had to hold each other in order to move on. At Hamburg we had to wait for the ship. People greeted us and for the first time since leaving our homes, we were treated well. The people of Berlin and Hamburg were very kind to us.

"We went to the beach to wash up because we had to be clean in order to board the ship. We were put in the lower deck of the ship with the cattle. The sea was so rough and it seemed a long time on the water. When we finally reached America, we had nothing," Grandpa concluded, while adding thoughtfully, "But now we have something." *(The End)*



Shown above are the parents of John Philip Dreher, Jr., along with his older sister, Anna Katherina. John Jr. was born in Russia on Feb. 10, 1867, and died in the USA on Oct. 27, 1960. All were early settlers of Liebenthal, Kansas.

Although the emigrants did not walk in straight lines, the map gives an idea of their route from Warsaw, Poland, to Hamburg, Germany.

NEWS & MEDIA TIDBITS

A 40-something travel buff who lives in Netherlands has a short feature on the Volga Germans at a website he maintains as a hobby. Go to www.mazalien.com/volga-germans.html and the first thing you'll see is a photo of Pete Felten's limestone sculpture of a Volga German family.

Among the interesting facts Maza reports:

- At least 1.5 million residents of Russia today have at least some German ancestry.
- Two percent of Kazakstan's current total population is German.
- The Volga River has over 200 tributaries.
- The Volga and its tributaries cover approximately 40 percent of European

Russia.

- The Volga contains about 70 different species of fish, including pike, herring, and sturgeon.
- There are more than 900 ports and 550 industrial docks along the full 2300-mile length of the Volga, which empties into the Caspian Sea.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We had excellent attendance at our Lenten potluck meeting, great food, exciting stories, and one *Esel* present!

Please note the information given on page 6 concerning the cost of a charter bus to attend the 2008 AHSGR convention in Casper, Wyoming, July 30-August 3. We will need 30 people to sign up before chartering a bus will be feasible. Please contact me by July 1 if you wish to sign up.

A member survey is on the last page of this newsletter. Please let us know how we are doing, and also please suggest some activities and entertainment for future meetings. Either bring your completed survey to the next meeting or mail it to the newsletter editor by April 27.

The spring chapter meeting will be on April 27, starting at 12:30 with a social. This time you won't have to bring anything but yourself and any guests you invite. The ice cream and cake will be provided by the ladies of the hospitality committee. Again there will be door prizes and another great folklore program planned and presented by Leona W. Pfeifer.

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting!

--Joe Werth

Where would the chapter be without volunteers for KP duty? Dolores Pfannenstiel is always part of the small army that keeps the kitchen running smoothly at chapter meetings.



EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Spring has finally sprung! For awhile there I was starting to wonder if Kansas was importing its weather from Siberia.

As I mentioned last time, the newsletter will no longer appear in color because of the huge costs involved. We were lucky to have a year's worth of color newsletters donated by chapter member Marvin Rack of Northwestern Printers, and I again I want to publicly thank him for that. I also encourage you to take any future printing needs you may have to Marvin's business at 114 West 9th in Hays. According to the ad in the yellow pages, Northwestern offers commercial printing and copying, full bindery service, in-house design services, and automated mailing services. For more information visit www.northwesternprintes.com or call 625-1110. If you wish to receive the newsletter by e-mail and print it in color at home, please send me your e-mail address if I don't have it already.

Thanks once again to Judy Hoffman for getting me more material for the "Liebenthal Locals" column that runs in every newsletter. Reprinting these items requires the tedious work of searching through countless rolls of microfilm at Barnard Library in LaCrosse. Thanks, also, to Bernie Schumacher for her article on old-time medicine and to Kevin Rupp for his piece on the late Frank Giebler. Finally, thanks to

Elmer Dreher for bringing me his cousin's article on their grandfather's emigration from Russia. I have received many positive comments from readers fascinated by Edgar Dreher's reminiscences.

If you know of any other items that might be of interest to newsletter readers, please bring them forward! Also, I'd be happy to print reports or observations of any kind from those who attend this summer's convention.

--Sister Alice Ann Pfeifer CSA

Can you help?

My name is Alexander Pfannenstiel. I was born in 1936 in the Volga area.

Recently I have come across a book, *Die Russlanddeutsche Gestern und Heute* by Bores Meissner, where I found information about a group of colonists from the German colony of Pfannenstiel who went to Kansas and founded a new colony, Herzog, at present Victoria. The book says that now there is an archive and a library in Victoria. In this book Nick J. Pfannenstiel was mentioned.

I am sure that this is my distant relative, and I would like to get in touch with the Victoria branch of your organization.

My mother used to tell us that there were a lot of Pfannenstiel families in the colony, and all of them were related.

My grandfather was Peter Pfannenstiel, son of Peter, and was born around 1855. He had three sons: Peter, born 1875; Heinrich, born 1884; and Leo, born 1892 (he is my father). There was also a daughter Eva, born 1896. The family lived in the Volga area until 1900, from where they moved to the village of Tonkoshurovka in Kazakhstan. My grandfather had a nickname "Tivlein," and his children were called "Tivleins."

If you can help the writer of the above letter, please contact Kevin Rupp. Call 785-625-6638 or e-mail krupp@ruraltel.net.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Please fill out this survey and bring it to the next meeting, or mail it to the newsletter editor at the address given below.

DUE DATE: APR. 27

1. Please check the subjects related to the Volga German heritage that most interest you:

- life in Old Russia
- life in frontier USA
- local village customs
- sacred music
- holidays
- village dialects
- humor
- faith life
- how to restore and preserve old photos
- how to cook VG-style
- how to do a genealogy
- how to write your family's story
- sewing arts
- woodworking arts
- children's toys and games
- learning to sing German songs
- listening to others sing in German
- folk music
- folk dance
- foods
- clothing
- folk medicine

2. Can you elaborate on any of the items you checked?

3. What are some topics and who are some presenters you'd like booked for future meetings?

SUNFLOWER CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

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